

# Telling Your Story Visually on Social Media

Credit: Climate Action Campaign



When you're crafting a message on social media, creating a narrative is important to its success.

Tara McMahon is the digital creative director at Climate Action Campaign, where she focuses on telling the story of climate change and finding innovative ways to convey the detailed science of climate change.

"Given the nature of platforms like Facebook and Twitter," said McMahon, "images and graphics offer an important opportunity to engage the reader in your story."

We asked McMahon to offer the YALI Network her tips for incorporating compelling visuals into online campaigns.

## **1. Create a mini-campaign "brand" for a set of visuals.**

Using consistent fonts, colors and design elements helps drive the overarching message visually.

## **2. Pick the best approach for telling your story.**

Info graphics are helpful for distilling finds in reports, photos are best for highlighting real-life impacts, and quotes and graphics are good for elevating direct stories.

## **3. Use your resources!**

The Internet is full of free and low-cost resources: templates for infographics, free fonts, color palette generators, Creative Commons photos and more.

## **4. Think of visuals as a companion to your messaging.**

For example, visuals can help tell a story about real-world local impacts of a global problem like climate change. It's important to start with a strong message you're looking to convey. Then visuals help give more context so you can craft a story that will really resonate with the viewer.

## **5. Be creative!**

Trying new things is the best way to determine what works with your audience. Test out using two different types of visuals that convey the same story and see which one engages people the most.

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# Using LinkedIn to Tell Your Organization's Story

Did you know that nearly 5,000 YALI Network members use the [YALI Network LinkedIn Group](#) to connect with one another and to grow their professional networks?

LinkedIn is a business-oriented social network that helps its users make professional connections, find jobs, discover leads and more. Users create their own professional profiles — similar to a digital resume — and establish connections with colleagues, potential partners and businesses.

If you are looking to share stories with an educated, affluent and professional audience, consider using LinkedIn. Its ability to engage a highly targeted, donor-rich demographic makes it a powerful distribution channel for social impact organizations.

The best way to share stories on LinkedIn is through status updates on your organization's Company Page. When sharing content on LinkedIn, be sure to post links and use images. Posts with links to other content have twice the engagement rate of posts without, and posts with images have a 98 percent higher comment rate.

Organizations should engage with their LinkedIn followers on a regular basis by encouraging them to participate in the conversations spurred by the stories you share in your status updates. You can further this participation by asking follow-up questions and writing status updates with clear calls to action.

To increase your organization's visibility on LinkedIn, you should create original content, encourage others to share your content, and give people a clear reason to engage with your content.


This article is adapted from Hatch for Good's [Guide to LinkedIn](#). Hatch for Good is a platform that provides people and organizations with the tools they need to create powerful stories and inspire positive action in the digital age. Visit [Hatch for Good's website](#) to view additional resources.

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## Building skills in technology

*"By building skills in technology creation, people can develop innovative solutions to community and economic problems and empower themselves to explore their full potential."*

- Regina Agyare

A Tech Needs Girls volunteer conducts a  lesson in writing computer code with girls in Accra. Credit: R. Agyare

Software developer Regina Agyare believes Information Technology (IT) can drive significant social change. A 2014 Mandela Washington Fellow, Agyare helped launch the U.N.-related project Tech Needs Girls in Ghana. Her own company, Soronko Solutions, uses information technology to develop solutions allowing clients to reach their potential.

**YALI Network Question:** How does IT promote human potential?

**Agyare:** Technology is a tool and an enabler to help people take an idea or solution from inception to execution. IT can help your idea leapfrog infrastructure gaps and impact a large number of people. By building skills in technology creation, people can develop innovative solutions to community and economic problems and empower themselves to explore their full potential.

**Question:** Describe Soronko's efforts to pursue those goals with girls in Ghana.

**Agyare:** Ghanaian women and girls are lagging behind in developing IT skills. At Soronko we run a project called Tech Needs Girls, which is a mentorship program where we teach girls between the ages of 6 and 18 years old how to code and create with IT tools. The girls are trained by young female mentors who study science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in the university. They use a unique curriculum, which makes coding fun and allows for creativity and problem solving.

Some of the girls in these programs are from slum communities and could be forced into early marriage. By teaching them coding skills, we hope to help them empower themselves economically and continue their education.

**Q:** Have the newly trained girls been able to move into jobs?

**Agyare:** Tech Needs Girls alumnae are currently doing internships at the biggest software company in Ghana, called Rancard Solutions.

**Q:** What has Soronko Solutions accomplished in helping Ghanaian businesses better use technology to expand?

**Agyare:** At Soronko Solutions, we believe in using technology to help Ghanaian businesses grow and gain visibility. We have built services to help a wide range of clients automate processes to make business operations more efficient, increase turnover and bring their services to the customer's doorstep.

**Q:** How does someone begin to work with or for Soronko?

**Agyare:** It is very accessible to work with Soronko. We are always looking for young individuals who are passionate about using technology to drive small businesses or promote social change. We also offer internships and sponsor clubs in the university where we train young women in STEM fields and prepare them for the job market or starting their own business.

**Q:** Soronko is working like some corporate and nonprofit hubs in the larger IT community that launch further waves of innovation in the communities surrounding them. How does that work?

**Agyare:** Innovation hubs are very important because they provide the space, training, skills development and inspiration to unlock the creative potential in our youth. They also allow for collaboration and for individuals with different skills and abilities to integrate their talents to solve community problems and develop themselves.

**Q:** What can YALI Network members do to start a hub in a community?

**Agyare:** The first thing would be to get a space to house hub activities. If one does not have access to a space, the next best thing is to create a virtual hub. That's an online community of people where knowledge is shared, innovation is encouraged and interactivity is expected. Hub members can meet regularly in open spaces or use community resources and spaces.

**Q:** Can their facilities also be meeting and networking spaces?

**Agyare:** Definitely, hub facilities can be meeting and networking spaces. It is actually important for the ecosystem and the success of hubs that meetings and networking among the members is encouraged.

**Q:** Are innovation hubs emerging in more places in Africa?


**Agyare:** Yes, and they are needed to address issues like Africa's huge unemployment problem and to engage young people to become innovative change-makers and problem solvers.

*Lukonga Lindunda, a Mandela Washington Fellowship alumus, provided [this interactive map](#) of innovation hubs around Africa. Read more about [Lindunda](#) and [BongoHive](#), the innovation hub he co-founded in Zambia.*

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## [Using Social Media to Grow Your Business](#)

Social media offer businesses a variety of tools to inform existing customers, connect with new ones, raise awareness about products and services and reach new customers and markets.

Monif Clarke uses a social media strategy to promote  sales for her specialty women's clothing company in New York City.

Credit: AP Images

You may have built a website to create an online presence for your business and serve as a platform for sales. It's like a reference book for your business, but a social media presence should be more

like a conversation with customers.

Using both forms of online communication strategically can increase your sales and customer base.

Here are a few tips on using social media sites to promote your business:

## **Be Brief**

Social media content must be short. Strive to be concise, and do not try to say everything at once.

Schedule your posts over the course of a day or week, focusing on one key message per post. Customers are more likely to read and remember short, focused messages rather than long, rambling ones.

## **Be Fresh**

Stand out from the continuous stream of social media content by posting timely, eye-catching content. Use images and videos whenever possible, and be sure to post frequently. Staying fresh in the minds of your followers will increase the chances they will choose your products or services.

## **Be Personal**

Social media can give your business a personal voice. Welcome new followers with a casual and friendly tone. Offer exclusive online promotions to these customers.

## **Be Interactive**

Keep your followers engaged by posting articles, links and other content they will find interesting.

Encourage interaction by asking questions and running contests. If you own a restaurant, for instance, ask your followers to name a new menu item. If you sell kitchen equipment, ask people to post their favorite recipes.

## **Be Responsive**

Listen to what customers are saying, so they'll know they're in a conversation. Ask for feedback. Reply to messages and comments. Acknowledge criticism and take steps to address complaints and suggestions.

## **Be Purposeful**

Do your research. Familiarize yourself with the rules of each social media platform and select one that allows you to address customers in a way that's appropriate for you.

Identify the social networks that are most popular with your target customers. Look for a network that gives you access to a population you had not considered before. Invest your time in those that offer the best opportunities for growth.

*This article is adapted and condensed from a longer version available on the State Department's [public diplomacy website](#).*

*During the month of November, the YALI Network will focus on the topic of entrepreneurship, in*

recognition of the [Global Entrepreneurship Summit](#) to held in Morocco November 19-21.

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